

Weare Open Space Committee  
Minutes  
May 27, 2008  
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Present were: George Malette, Pat Myers, Margaret Watkins (PLC), John Ciampi (secretary) Steve Najjar (chair), Ian McSweeney (Russell Foundation), Leonard Allen (default chair of the PLC).

The meeting commenced at 7:10 PM.

The first call to order was introductions of Mr. Allen to the members of the OSC.

**Hawkes/Wilson Update:** Steve began this segment of discussions by pointing out the good news concerning this land contact in which Marsha Beecy, of MH Appraisers, has signed the Wilson/Hawkes contracts. Steve spoke with her about setting up meetings with Rod and Shawn in which he will try to attend. Marsha would like to have a consulting forester be involved with this land opportunity in order to secure a timber value on this land. The tab for the forester will be paid by the Town. Margaret said she had spoke with Rod and Shawn today to let them know she'll be stepping down from her current position, and also Marsha will be meeting with them tomorrow (5-28). Margaret also commented that Rod is concerned about the forestry assessment because he has no interest of removing any trees, to which Margaret remarked that if the easement language allows forestry, then that must be taken into consideration. Margaret stated it isn't clear to her if Rod wants to set up some kind of "forever wild", no cutting allowed kind of easement. Margaret mentioned the PLC *would* approve a "forever wild" type of easement. And, she added, if he decided to go that route, the timber value *would not* be deducted from the value of the acreage. Margaret affirmed that a necessary exception to the "no cut" language of this proposed easement would be in event of emergencies, for example, a road would need to be cut through in event of a forest fire. Steve countered that in event of a "no cut" easement, future logging prospects would have to be eliminated. Margaret responded she only through out that particular scenario because Rod has no intentions of cutting, and he is wondering as to why his value of the property would be reduced by the value of the timber since he has no desire to log his land in the first place. Steve commented there must be high value timber on his property, considering that his land harbors choice quality Red Oak in a forest that has been responsibly managed.

Steve explained the contract the Town signed included the 70 and 80 acre parcels, and the 30 acre piece is currently in process of foreclosure. Ian stated he searched on Ameriquest and found the selling price of the 30 acre piece to be \$280,000.00, and he doesn't know how far along it is in the foreclosure process. Ian explained there is an additional lien for \$22,000.00 on the property, above the \$280K selling price. Margaret reverberated that the realtor has been working on this property for some 2 years, and if he can figure out a way to sell it for \$280K, he will, since he is very motivated and astute. Margaret added the selling price is more than the property is worth, so the conundrum is from where will this funding come? Ian will contact Ameriquest to try and determine how they plan to organize the sale, for instance, will they want one lump sum, or receive portions in half year increments. Steve related that Shawn's P&S was \$1500.00/acre, seemingly low. Ian doesn't believe that price to be low considering there is no road access.

Pat mentioned that the Open Space funding situation is now rather tenuous, to which Steve explained that the Committee's funding situation depends on the outcome of the appraisal and how successfully other parties can be coerced to do more funding. Ian wondered

if the 30 acre parcel were developed, would that prompt Rod and Shawn to back out of the project? However, popular opinion of other members disavowed that concern due to Rod and Shawn's commitment to the project. Margaret chimed the only way Rod would possibly back out was if the appraisal came in at much below \$3,000.00/acre. Pat asked, "What is on the 30 acre piece that could be of value to the Town", to which Steve replied, "Its overall conservation value". Steve wanted to make sure the OSC is comfortable with his agreement with Rod and Shawn to press the campaign forward with the contract even though their playing field has changed slightly. Margaret singled out that Shawn offered to return the \$500.00 down payment made to him from the PLC.

Steve summed up the current Hawkes/Wilson land project by saying, "Despite a few bumps in the road, this land contact is moving forward".

**Contact Letters:** Steve was not able to send out the "we're broke" mailings to the current land contacts, as to date.

**Open Space Plan:** Steve wondered if sections of the Open Space Plan could be scanned into PDF file and bring it into Word. There are 55 pages of the Open Space Plan, according to George. Steve asked generically if there Town has an electronic copy. He also mentioned that Acrobat Pro has the capacity to convert a PDF file into recognizable form. Pat wondered if the Planning Commission would be able to assist in downloading the Open Space Plan document, or perhaps someone at the Town office may have access to Acrobat Pro. Steve suggested that now the OSC is in a funding lull, it could begin other projects related to the mission of the OSC, such as updating the Open Space Plan, inventorying Town owned parcels, and, as Margaret suggested integrating maps into the Town owned parcel report, and George volunteered to begin making recommendations for next year's warrant articles. Margaret suggested that having an open space plan in place could conceivably lay the groundwork for future monetary appeals to the Town body, particularly if incorporated into the Master Plan.

**Granit:** John noted that his parcel of conservation land, in which the Wildlife Land Trust is the primary easement holder, has not been inventoried into the Granit system. Pat assumed the WLT may not be familiar with this New Hampshire establishment and they should be contacted concerning this matter.

**PSNH:** Steve asked John if he would inquire if PSNH would be interested in converting some 80 acres surrounding their new substation on Norris Rd. into some form of land protection, to which John agreed to follow up.

**Funding:** Pat asked Margaret if she is aware of other funding sources, other than the Federal Farm and Ranch Program, in which Margaret replied there is the Forest Legacy Program and LCHIP, both of which have had their revenues reduced, and there still are some private foundations willing to support land acquisition projects. Also included is the Wetland Reserve which is tied to the Farmland Program, and is a 100% grant if qualifying stipulations are met. Margaret also mentioned there is \$135,000.00 earmarked to the PLC from the Farmland Program after 2008.

**Non Public Session:** Andrea made motion to go into non public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3IIe in order to discuss information regarding a possible conservation project. Pat 2<sup>nd</sup>, all voted in favor, and the non public session went into effect at 8:19 PM.

Andrea made motion to exit the non public session, and Pat 2<sup>nd</sup>. All voted in favor, the motion carries, and the non public session ended at 8:28 PM.

Andrea made motion to seal and restrict the non public minutes, pursuant to RSA 91-A:3III, and Pat 2<sup>nd</sup>. All voted in favor and the motion carries.

**Adjournment of OSC Meeting:** George made motion to end the OSC meeting, and John 2<sup>nd</sup>. All voted in favor, and the motion carries. The meeting adjourned at 8:32 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Ciampi  
Recording Secretary WOSC

Cc: files  
Town Clerk  
Merry Rice  
BOS